

# THE REFORMER.

No. V.]

PHILADELPHIA, MAY 1, 1820.

[VOL. I.

Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth. . . . Jeremiah, v. 1.

*Extract of a letter from a friend at Poughkeepsie to the editors.*

“ I have for a long time been anxious to see a channel of information opened, through which truth might find its way to the people; and am happy to find that your Reformer, *thus far*, comprehends all my wishes, and far exceeds my most sanguine expectations. That the doctrines and commandments of men have gained almost universal possession of the people’s judgment, to the exclusion of the true gospel, remains no longer a doubt; and that those who profess to be preachers of that gospel, are making merchandize of it, every day’s observation fully demonstrates.

“ The principles which you espouse, are calculated to excite the fears, and to draw forth the opposition of college-made priests and salary ministers. *The reason is obvious*—the craft is in danger; and it is by this craft that they have their wealth; that they have stations of ease; that they have the honour and esteem of this world; that they have the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. And thus, with all the approbation and applause which the wisdom of this world can suggest, they can, while exalted on the throne of Antichrist, sit in (*what they call*) the temple of God (*to wit, a steeple house*) and receive the titles of reverend and right reverend—titles unsuitable to be applied but to God only.

“ As you are modest in your attempts to expose error,

you may possibly think the term *Antichrist* rather harsh ; but as the gospel of Jesus Christ knows of but two classes of men in the world, *those for Christ, and against him*, I conclude the term Antichrist is the only proper one to be used in speaking of men who do not live conformably with the true spirit of Christianity ; for Christ has said " He that is not for me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

" P. S. I think you can safely depend on those who patronize your work in this place for durable and constant support.—Subscribers are daily increasing, and more and more anxious to see truth and error fairly and impartially contrasted."

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*To the editors of The Reformer.*

It is a sorrowful, and to me not a satisfactory reflection to know, that my communications written expressly for *The Reformer*, are calculated, in a high degree, to offend the clergy. I say written expressly for *The Reformer*, because I am well assured that the editors of no other periodical work now printed would have the liberality or the firmness to insert them : for it is an almost universal rule among the conductors of periodical works and journals in this day, to keep back the truth if it would be likely to give offence, and seek to please rather than to be useful. I am far from wishing to offend, but I write from a sense of duty, and therefore, am not permitted to temporize or support error.

With regard to what I have stated concerning our missionary undertakings, I here observe, I would be sorry to discourage any thing calculated to do good or to promote the happiness of mankind ; and did the missionaries go forth in the spirit of love, and support the cause

of Christ by example as well as precept, I should consider it among the greatest of crimes to speak against them. But this is far from being the case, as statements already made in *The Reformer* sufficiently show ; and it is proper that the subject should be represented in its true light. Without feeling any dismay, I shall continue to forward to you such reflections as may hereafter be presented to me.

SOPHRONIA.

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*For The Reformer.*

I have read with considerable attention the numbers of *The Reformer* which have been published, and cheerfully acknowledge myself much gratified with the general character of the work. Indeed, I think, every real friend of truth and vital piety, who is disposed to divest his mind of sectarian prejudice, cannot but be pleased that so convenient a medium exists for the inculcation of the essential doctrines of christianity, and calling the attention of its professors to the real state of the christian world.

I am aware it is a prevalent opinion, that this is an age of great light ; that the gospel is making progressive advances in the world ; that multitudes, in every part of christendom, are submitting to the yoke of Christ ; moreover, that the subjects of Paganism are ready, in large numbers, to bow to the sceptre of Emmanuel. I am not disposed wholly to call in question the correctness of these views. The present age may, in comparison with those that preceded it, in some sense be considered an age of increased light. The human mind has been studied with more attention. The natural and civil rights of man are better understood, and more clearly defined. Governments have been established on more enlarged and equitable principles. And even christianity, by opposing the rational proofs of its truth and divinity against the flimsy, yet poisoned shafts of infidelity, has recommended itself to more general acceptance.



But it is not a bare admission of the truth of Christianity, that can make us christians indeed, or entitle us to the kingdom of heaven. As "they were not all Israel that were of Israel," so they are not all Christians that are of Christendom. It is true, there is in the world much show of religion and piety; and to a superficial view this may be identified with the substance. But I believe the sincere and discriminating observer will readily perceive, that "all that glitters is not gold;"—that a great part of what currently passes for christian devotion and evangelical piety, is falsely so called—is but the production of the active disposition of the human mind unrenewed by the sanctifying influences of Divine love, and what, in apostolic language, is emphatically styled *will worship*.

The time is coming—and how soon it will arrive is known only to God—when the foundation of each of us will be tried; when we shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and any other covering than that of his spirit will be of no avail. It is, then, of incalculable importance to us that we know on what foundation we are building our hopes of eternal life. Let us cultivate an ingenuous spirit, and be willing to try ourselves. "Try yourselves," says the Apostle, "prove yourselves, know ye not your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you except you are reprobates." Why should we deceive ourselves, or permit others to deceive us? The day will declare our work of what kind it is; and we must be individually accountable to God. If we are deceived, the loss will be our own. Let us be careful then, to judge for ourselves in the important matters relating to salvation, and not be misled by an implicit attachment to others, or their opinions, however high or sacred may be their characters, lest "the blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch."

If we possess an ingenuous spirit, we shall judge with impartiality of what is said or written with a view to benefit mankind, however opposed it may be to the particular systems in which we are involved, or however it may be at variance with the sentiments we have previously entertained.

CHRISTOPHILUS.



*For The Reformer.*

Great efforts are now making to spread the Gospel among the heathen, and many are engaged in the work. This would be a pleasing circumstance, and a praise-worthy employment, if those who send, and those who are sent to diffuse the knowledge of this gospel, were acquainted with it themselves, and acted upon truly christian principles. Principles that breathe *peace on earth, and good will to men.*

One object of foreign missions among the heathen, is, to abolish the custom of human sacrifices. But, let us pause, and consider whether there is among the pagans a custom more repugnant to the spirit of the christian religion, than war? If then, this work of reforming should be attempted by a compassionate missionary, who, though he pities these mistaken people; yet, if he on any consideration justifies christians in making human sacrifices in war, how natural would it be for a well informed Hindoo to say, "Can that religion be less reconcilable to reason and humanity, which barely permits devotees to offer up their own lives, than that which allows them by every means which the most artful ingenuity can devise, or the most unfeeling cruelty can execute, to destroy millions? And yet it is for such a religion as this, that you would persuade the worshippers of Juggernaut to forsake theirs !!!"

It is not from a spirit of war or revenge, that the parent in India casts his living child into the Ganges; or that the widow burns on the funeral pile of her deceased husband; or that others prostrate themselves to be crushed to death by the Idol's car. We may indeed justly deplore these delusions, and attempt their abolition; but as these sacrifices are not made from ill will towards fellow beings, but merely from mistaken religious opinion, must they not be far less offensive in the divine sight, than the war sacrifices of christians, which are made in the desolating spirit of revenge?

These remarks are far from being made in a spirit hostile to foreign missions, when those who perform them are rightly commissioned, and are governed by the

spirit of Him who sent his apostles to preach to the heathen. Neither are they made from a supposition that those in favour of them, are more the advocates of war than other people. But it is devoutly to be wished, that no missionaries will henceforth go among the heathen, without having their minds deeply imbued with the principles and spirit of peace. These, accompanied with meekness, humility and love, are the very essence of the gospel which they should preach; and on no other subject should they be more faithfully examined. For whatever other qualifications they may possess, without these they will never thoroughly preach the Gospel; but will be constantly exposed to self-contradiction.

On these principles greater access might probably have been had to the minds of the Indians of this land, and much more done in converting them to Christianity. Excellent as the gospel is in itself, yet if it fail to produce in its professors the spirit of peace, love and forgiveness of injuries, their efforts to christianize heathens, will be unavailing.

A. B.

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*For The Reformer.*

*Messrs. Editors.*—The present writer is one, who thinks with several of your correspondents, that the full effulgence of Gospel light and glory has not yet shone upon the Christian world. I cannot but take notice of facts, which tend to abate my absolute confidence to the pretension, that all knowledge rests in the present generation.—Some of them are these: All our present light, is the same which only *dawned* in the *Reformation* of Luther. Most parties now affect to consider that Reformation matured then: but we are informed “Luther made his discoveries by *degrees*, and was *far from intending* when he began to oppose Tetzel and the abuses of Popery, that Reformation which he afterwards effected.” “He would have trembled at that.”—“The exposing of one error gradually led him



to the detection of another."—If therefore, after he had detected some errors, he was still in many things a *Papist*, is it not reasonable that when he had seen all *he could*, he would be even then, in part a *Papist*! Had he lived till now, is it probable he would have developed no new light, seeing while he lived, he was never ceasing to see more clearly! Then how comes it, that the Theological world, who had parties at that Reformation, retain all their original views with amazing tenacity and admit of no new discoveries? Is it not because, Theology is taught in schools, and men can only believe and see, through the *medium* furnished them by the *alma mater*—their colleges, &c. Now if Luther was a *Dominican*, and deeply attached to *St. Augustin*, is it not possible after all, that our Theology is still tinged with the corruptions of the original turbid stream of *Rome*! And what hope have we to escape the influence of such a guide, unless we occasionally listen to the voice of such *Laymen*, as Erasmus, who being men freed from *ordination* fetters and *pledges*, will venture to speak out their minds, and to be careless of *he set ideas*, set down for the schools of the Prophets!

Dr Watts was an enlightened and spiritual divine, and although he saw the errors of prejudice and the evils of *preconception*, had, notwithstanding, to drift along in the common stream—Yet he had sense enough to perceive, and to remark, that "Errors proceed from reading the Scriptures with a whole set of notions established *before hand*. Thus *Diacein* has long ago determined that *Bishops* must be superior to *Presbyters*. He had received episcopal ordination, and hopes one day to be able to ordain others! All that he reads has a *diocesan* aspect. *Synodius* reads with a *Presbyterian* glass—When each reads the word *Church*, they make it alternately a *diocese* or an *assembly of Divines*; and when poor *Parochianus*, the mason, reads of it, he thinks only of a tall stone building with steeple, bell, and weathercock."—In this manner, they who meet with *holiness*, *sanctification*, *perfection*, &c. have each their several senses immediately applied, not considering that the



*context* in all such cases, gives them at different times, very different complexions and import.

John Wesley was a great Reformer: but all his ideas were modelled and framed in Oxford, in the Theology of the schools—and all his discoveries were reluctant and very slow.—He could not believe in a “Justification by Faith”—by no means. It was Presbyterian heresy! Then such was his sacred regard for episcopal ordination, that lay ministers, however favoured of Heaven, were a monstrous outrage on the infallibility of mother Church. Yet in time these prejudices were subdued. Dr. A. Clarke in his Preface to *Hebrews* has this encouragement to inquiry, “thousands may come *after me*, and still cast light on all these scriptures.”

BEREANUS.

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*For The Reformer.*

TO THE EDITORS—

The first three numbers of your little work were put into my hands a few days ago for perusal. Your title is a bold one, and one which I fear will not prepossess the world in your favour. I confess, however, I am glad to see announced, a work, the design of which is to represent “in their true colours,” many things which, for aught that meets the public eye to the contrary, appear to be generally considered as deserving of all praise; but which in reality have their origin in no better source than the corrupt propensities of human nature.

I have long regretted that so large a portion of the periodical works of the day, which might be supposed to present to the public a field for fair discussion, are so generally pledged to the promotion of party views, or so biassed by a view to patronage, that they seem afraid to publish any thing which may risk their popularity with their readers.—I hope your work may be of a different character; and that when it can no longer be supported without a dereliction of the principles upon which you have ushered it into the world, it may be abandoned; but I trust you will find, that the number of those who view as you do, many of

the *great works* that are now bewildering the superficial world, are more numerous than either you or the public are aware of.

It is a trite observation, that men are apt to judge of actions more by their splendour than their merit. War owes much of its popularity to this cause; as does also *that* christianity which courts the esteem of worldly men, and the favour of worldly governments, by the approbation of many things which it ought rather boldly and openly to rebuke. How have I been disgusted at the time-serving disposition of some who call themselves ministers of the Gospel! who, while exerting their ingenuity and their eloquence to gain subscriptions for the maintenance of christian missionaries in foreign lands, content, as to proper subjects of emulation, to the "Army and Navy," and dwell with enthusiasm on the "glory" with which *they* had crowned the American name. Alas! have I thought, what a degenerate, vain-glorious, temporizing, *local* christianity is this! And is this the Christianity which we are so anxious to extend to the heathen, beyond seas, that in our zeal for them, we overlook the gross violation of the common principles of justice and compassion, towards those within our own borders!

From the style of some of the missionary communications, one would be induced to believe, that they considered the salvation of the heathen as dependent entirely on *their* exertions:—in short, that God had till now quite forgotten, and left to perish, the larger part of his rational creation; and that now he had consigned the work entirely to the hands of men-made ministers. For it must be observed by the bye, that although those societies who insist on the necessity of human learning, acknowledge it to be the prerogative of Christ to send forth ministers; yet they virtually reserve to themselves a *veto* on the exercise of this prerogative. The choice *must* be made from among such as have been endowed with what, according to *their* ideas, is a "competent portion of human learning." At a future period I may refer you to some curious documents in relation to this subject.

DANIEL.



*For The Reformer.*

*Messrs. Editors.*—I am pleased with the liberality you have manifested, in giving my communication respecting a reduction of the power of our Annual and General Conferences, and the propriety of a lay-representation, &c. a place in your useful publication. The substance of that communication had for some time engaged my attention, and it is satisfactory to me to find, and it may not be improper for you to be informed, that it has received the approbation of many belonging to the same community with myself, (the members of which are both numerous and respectable) whose minds have been exercised similar to my own on that important subject.

But it has been asserted by some, that the Ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church will not listen to any remonstrances or appeals made to them by any of their members; that they will never deviate from the old order of things established among them, and to which they have been so long accustomed; but having the power in their own hands, they will follow the dictates of their own policy without regarding the counsel or caution of any, and preserve inviolate the power with which they are at present invested.

It is possible that this may prove to be the case. I cannot, however, persuade myself to believe, but there are those among our preachers possessed with both piety and good sense, sufficient to warrant a better result. Such an assumption of authority and unyielding adherence to arbitrary power in the ministers of Christ, but ill accord with the true spirit of Christianity, and can only find abettors, I should suppose, among teachers belonging to the most corrupt religious persuasions, who are so closely connected with the civil and political compact of some state, that it is not easy to separate them and bring them to a correct policy without prostrating both together. Teachers of this description have no existence under the happy form of government adopted by the people of this country; and surely from the model furnished by our excellent constitution, and the example



of a *lay-representation* in almost every other religious society, it cannot be viewed as an unreasonable expectation, that our preachers should of their own accord, at the next General Conference, form a system of government as perfect and as accordant with the principles of the gospel, as either that of the Presbyterians or the Society of Friends.\*

\* The Presbyterian General Assemblies and Synods, are composed of an equal number of Ministers and Elders, and in many cases there is a majority of lay-representatives; for those congregations destitute of a Pastor, are sometimes allowed to send their Elders to share in the general interests of the church Militant. The Society of Friends present a still more perfect system of republican church government, which is without a parallel in the religious world, as no superiors or inferiors have any existence amongst them, unless it be on the ground of merit, acquired by long experience in spiritual things.

One defect in our Discipline, among many others that might be noticed, is that which relates to bringing to trial, members charged with immorality. The rule directs that they shall be tried by the Society of which they are members, or a select part of them. By *the Society of which they are members*, we are at a loss to understand what is meant. If it apply to the whole of the members composing the Society in a city, we shall have a Jury, to decide on a case, of from one to two thousand persons. If it apply to the Class of which the accused is a member, a difficulty will likewise present itself; for in some Classes, there are no males, except the Leaders. If it should happen, that the Leader were the offender, then, according to this rule, the females composing the Class, with a preacher, would be the spiritual court to decide on the case of the Leader. The preachers, from these circumstances, almost uniformly select a committee out of the body of the society; and any person may easily perceive, how abuses may be practised in this way; particularly as the selection rests solely in the preacher, and against none, whom he selects, is the defendant allowed to object, as in civil cases, where the defendant may challenge four at least out of twelve of the Jury, in all actions of a criminal nature. Now, when we consider how possible it is for a dislike to exist in the preacher towards the person accused, in consequence of some opposition he may have made to his measures, and the liability there is for his judgment to be warped by influential or wealthy members of the Society with whom he is intimate, &c. &c. is it not evident that, with this selected Jury, and probably this partial Judge, the best of men may be greatly injured or oppressed; and that, too, at the expense of the peace and quiet of a large portion of the Society?

It may here be objected that the Presbyterian clergy, whose ecclesiastical power is restrained by such an equitable representation on the part of the members as has been proposed, do not furnish an example very peculiar, either for their piety or usefulness, notwithstanding this boasted superiority of their church government, over that of our own community.

As a reply to this objection, the question might with propriety be asked, What would they be, provided no such regulation existed in their form of church government. for being generally educated in corrupt Seminaries,\* and engaging in the ministry from lucrative motives, with, perhaps, but little of the spirit of Christ, is it not reasonable to suppose, that they would rule as with a rod of iron, and lord it over their flocks, if they were invested with absolute and unlimited power, as the ministers of the society to which I belong now are?

With regard to the meek and lowly mind, urged in my former communication, as an essential requisite in those who preach the gospel, in order to be useful in promoting the true interests of the Redeemer's kingdom on earth, no one of the graces, held forth in the New Testament, appears to be so little cultivated as this in the present day. The human heart is, indeed, extremely averse to come down, to be meek and humble, to forego power and authority over others, and become *as a servant to all*—the only way to be truly great in the kingdom of Christ. For we find, on one occasion, when the disciples had been disputing among themselves which of them should be greatest, Christ took a little child, (destitute of all such aspiring and ambitious thoughts) and set him in the midst, as an example to them, of what they ought to be; and told them, whosoever should humble himself as that little child, the same should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, or under the dispensation of the gospel.

\* John and Charles Wesley, with others, were expelled the Oxford College for reading the scriptures, prayer, &c. A sure sign (says a shrewd writer) that the Principal of that Institution, & as the Trustees, were not guilty of the same crime.



It is, no doubt, on account of this aversion of our nature to become humble and lowly, that a rich man, shall with so great difficulty enter the kingdom of God—for riches have a direct tendency to exalt the mind, and into this kingdom of God, Christ has declared none can enter, except they are converted and become as *little children*. I now ask, If it is so very difficult for those who have riches to be humble and lowly of mind, must it not be equally difficult, for those ecclesiastics who are vested with absolute and unlimited power in the government of their religious communities, to have such a disposition of mind? or can they be entrusted with it and exercise it, without having the humility and meekness they may already possess, impaired by such a trust.

I did not take up my pen with a view to enter largely into the discussion of this subject; but as one that wishes well to the community with which I am united, and I trust, feels a love to the true kingdom of the Redeemer, I submit these remarks for the consideration of those whom they may equally concern with myself.

A METHODIST.

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*For The Reformer.*

Is there any thing whereof it may be said—See this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us. Eccl. i. 10.

It has been thought by some, that The Reformer will do a great deal of injury to religion, because it opposes many of the ways and practices at present among the professors of it. But this is nothing new; *it hath been already of old time*; for many of the Jews, no doubt, supposed that religion was about to be destroyed out of the land, when pious king Hezekiah undertook to put away the corrupt worship of that day, and removed the high places, broke the images, cut down the groves, and broke in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for (*says the text*) “unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it.” The king of Assyria was evidently of an opinion, that the true worship of God was pretty much done away among the Israelites, when the



great outward show, which had so long been substituted in the place of it was removed: and to convince them that it was now in vain to expect the Lord would protect them against his forces, he said, "If ye say unto me, We trust in the Lord our God: is not that he whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away."

Many professed christians in this our day, appear to know as little respecting the true nature of religion, as this heathen king; and think the kingdom of God manifests itself with *observation*—or great outward show. Such professors as these, it is reasonable to suppose, will conclude that The Reformer will do much harm to religion.—For, if I rightly understand the principles of The Reformer, its main design is to remove the high places, and take away the altars, on which so much gold, and silver, and false worship are offered, without regarding the anger or combinations of the craftsmen, who have their wealth, reputation and ease, by keeping up a veneration for these things. Should some even cry out, that the world is about to be turned upside down, by delivering plain truth, and opposing the evils now in christendom, we must not cease to endeavour to enlighten the public mind, and to hold up to view wherein pure and undefiled christianity consists.

#### EVANGELIST.

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#### RELIGION.

"THE duties of religion are perhaps generally too much confined to certain rites and ceremonies, which are not so essential as many duties of life, which in many cases are neglected, by those who are uncommonly punctual in observing religious ceremonies. These suggestions seem to be countenanced by our Saviour's rebuke to the Pharisees who paid tithes of mint, anise, and cummin, but omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith.

"The duty of prayer is, in general, more urged by those to whom the people look for religious instruction, than the duty of providing comfortable food and raiment for

our children. In relation to this, it may be said, this ought ye to have done, and not left the other undone. But it is often said of a man, he is a good moralist, a good husband, a good father, an honest, upright man in his dealings with men, a kind neighbour in sickness, but has no religion. So of a woman, she sees well to the ways of her house, eats not the bread of idleness, is an excellent wife and mother, and seems to take delight in the cares and duties of her family, remembers the poor, and is ready to watch with, and nurse the sick ; but she has no religion. But if male or female will join some church, attend every conference meeting far and near, talk a great deal about the concern they feel for poor immortal souls, for fear they will go to hell, appear to be in wonderful distress about what will become of the poor benighted people of India in a future world ; if their children are half naked, and half starved in the streets, such people have got religion !

“ These remarks are not made with a desire to lessen the genuine exercises of piety and devotion, but with a view to recommend the common duties of life as inseparably connected with true religion.” [ *Boston paper.*

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Communicated.

#### RELIGIOUS DISSIPATION.

Extract from “ *A sketch of my Friend's Family, intended to suggest some practical hints on Religion, and Domestic Manners.*”

By Mrs. MARSHALL:—recently published in Boston.

“ We had not risen from the breakfast table one morning, when a female, rather young, and fashionably dressed, entered the room. After a few common place civilities, she turned to Mrs. Clifford, saying, ‘ I called to tell you that Mr. S—— is in town, he preaches to day at——, and you must positively put on your things, and go with me to hear him.’ ‘ Could I consistently do so,’ replied her friend, ‘ I should be very happy to accompany you ; but, excuse me if I say, that were this excellent man to see the dear little group by which I am surrounded, he would



be the first to forbid my leaving them to listen to his sermon.'

"Perhaps the conscious recollection of some duty unperformed at home, just then stung the feelings of our fair devotee; or it might be purely a misguided zeal, which reddened on her cheek, as she retorted somewhat sharply. 'When, like Martha's, the heart is careful and troubled about many things, it is easy to find a pretext of duty to prevent our listening to the words of Jesus.'

"Mrs. Clifford mildly answered, 'I hope I am aware of this plausible deception, but in the present instance I am not conscious of meriting the rebuke. You may remember, my dear Mrs. Hammond, that Martha was not censured for a necessary attention to her *ordinary* and relative duties; but for an undue anxiety, and ostentatious and ill-timed desire of providing "things, more than hospitably good." Perhaps too, I may remind you that there subsists a visible difference between her neglecting to hear the words of her Redeemer, when he honoured her roof with his sacred presence, and my declining to attend the discourse of one of his servants, when such an attendance would necessarily involve a neglect of duties, more strictly enjoined upon me.' 'You have always a great deal to say about *duties*, my dear,' resumed the lady; 'but if I read my bible aright, no duties are so acceptable with God, as an affectionate reception of his gospel, and a desire to see his kingdom advanced in our own hearts, and in the world around us.' She then magnanimously declared her resolution 'to persist in her attachment to the "word preached,"' although it continued to expose her to many domestic sacrifices and involved her in several petty persecutions.'

"I believe Mrs. Clifford could have evinced to her fair friend, that she had *not* 'read her bible aright;' but as a spirit of recrimination certainly was not the temper by which she sought to maintain the honour of religion, she thought it better to drop the subject, than to expose her visiter to the imminent risk of losing her temper.

"A short silence therefore ensued, till Mr. Clifford inquired of Mrs. Hammond 'whether she had yet had an opportunity of visiting the sick woman, whose case he recommended to her?' 'No, really,' she replied, 'I have not



had one moment of leisure since you named her to me. On Monday, I was at a bible society's meeting; Tuesday, I went to hear Mr. ——— preach; Wednesday, I dined at Mrs. Nelson's, where a select number of serious friends were assembled to meet the Rev. Mr. H———; all Thursday I was occupied in endeavouring to procure subscribers to our Dorcas society; and to day I shall hardly have time to swallow my dinner, on my return home, before the arrival of a lady, who has promised to go with me to hear a sermon for the benefit of our Sunday school.'

"As Mrs. Hammond paused, I asked my friend, in a low voice, 'is it possible to be *religiously dissipated*?' 'I fear it is a *possible*, though not, I should hope, a very frequent case,' he observed; then turning to the lady who had given birth to the supposition, he said, 'as your engagements are already so numerous, I fear your intended charity will come too late for poor Susan.—Our Emma saw her on Wednesday, she was then almost incapable of receiving any nourishment; and I believe, that in a few days, her sufferings and her wants will cease.'

"If I mistake not, Mr. Clifford designed to convey a practical reproof to this 'wandering star,' and perhaps for a moment it was felt as such; but soon the salutary effects of her regret evaporated in extravagant expressions of sorrow.' 'Surely,' she exclaimed, 'there never was so unfortunate a being before: I would have made *any* sacrifices rather than have lost the opportunity of hearing the dying language of this poor but pious creature!' Then addressing Emma, 'How I envy you Miss Clifford; it must be a sweet satisfaction, to reflect on the many hours which, for this year past, you have spent in reading to the aged sufferer. Perhaps, my dear, you will write a short narrative of her; it would be a charming obituary; send it to me when it is drawn up, and I will get it published. Don't you think it would be very interesting, Mrs. Clifford?' she continued, turning to her, before she had given Emma time to reply.

"Mrs. Clifford replied, 'to us, who have so long witnessed her patient sufferings, every circumstance of Susan's death would be highly interesting; but I doubt whether it would be equally so to the public eye,' &c. &c.

"The clock now struck nine, and our morning visiter, starting from her seat, took a hasty leave, alleging, that she had a long way to walk, and must be there by 10 o'clock, for if she were not in time for the prayer, she would have to stand all sermon time, as it would be impossible to obtain a seat afterwards." page 64—71.

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[A small work has been published at Poughkeepsie, N. Y. called "The Bee."\* The title, it would appear was adopted on account of a practice, by certain religious societies in that State, of annually assembling to what is termed a *Bee* for their Priests; at which time they present them with gifts and donations, in addition to their regular salaries. The first number seems principally designed to reprove this practice, and show the impropriety of withholding from the poor, and bestowing upon those already rich. We shall make a few extracts from the work.]

"It is surprising to me, that man can be so lost to common feelings for his fellow-creatures, as to neglect their wants, and to turn a deaf ear to the plaintive cries of suffering humanity; when, at the same time, he can profusely lavish his golden gift upon a pampered priesthood. Strange infatuation! that can thus deaden the noblest impulse of the soul, and convert that surplus of wealth, which would send happiness to the hovel of wretchedness, to deck the voluptuous sideboard of plenty.

"At a time like the present, when one half of the mechanics and labourers of this village are out of employ, the benevolent have not to search for proper objects to bestow their bounty upon. Let them visit the houses of mourning and penury, and there they will find real objects of want and compassion. It cannot be called charity, where from a mistaken zeal, they bestow their property upon individuals, whose situation in life is above the pressure of the times, and in circumstances far above many who contribute to those annual gifts. I have been informed that people come forward at these times, with their offerings of unrighteousness, who refuse to pay their honest debts; and some who leave children at home wanting the common necessities of life. Monstrous infatuation! that mankind can be so blinded by custom and superstition.

"That the unlettered class of society should be led away by false notions of rectitude, is not strange; but, that men of edu-

\* Here it may be proper to observe, that when a number of people assemble for the purpose of gratuitously assisting a neighbour, it is termed a *Bee*, in many parts, and probably throughout the state of New York: and hence, those assemblies, at which offerings are made to their Priests, are also denominated *Bee*.

[Note by the Editors of *The Reformer*.]



cation and elevated rank in society, and professing themselves to be faithful ministers of the gospel, should sanction such proceedings, and accept these polluted offerings, is a most crying sin; they ought to have a greater regard for their characters, and for the sacred calling which they profess, than to countenance such delusion and unhallowed contributions."

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[Since the preceding was in type, we have received the second number of "The Bee," from which we shall also make extracts. Soon after its publication, there appeared a piece printed in the same place, entitled, "The Vindicator." This piece we shall likewise lay before our readers.—Before the second number of "The Bee" was printed, *The Reformer*, as was stated in the "Dutchess County Observer," had "received the anathema, from (what is called) the sacred desk;" an allusion to which will be seen, in the following extracts taken from the second number of "The Bee."]

"*Let there be light, and there was light.*" This was the command of the Almighty Founder of the Universe, and chaos obeyed the mandate, and disappeared before the effulgent rays of a resplendent sun.

"Light is an emblem of the cultivated mind, when unclouded by the murky vapours of ignorance and superstition. Uncontaminated by these deadly poisons, it is the rudder which steers us through life's tempestuous ocean undismayed, and fearless of the noisy clamour of popular phrenzy, or religious bigotry. The mind is an active power, and always in motion, progressing rapidly toward perfection; and it is not the anathema of a \*\*\*\*\*r, or the *auto-de-fe* of a \*\*\*\*\*d, that can arrest its flight. It will continue to march on with a steady step, until it has mounted the ramparts of error and superstition, and levelled in the dust those remnants of Gothic barbarism. Could (the self-styled Rev.) Mr. C. think, that he could stop the progress of free inquiry, when he recommended to his congregation not to read, nor yet "even to touch" a praise-worthy little work, called *The Reformer*? or, could (the self-styled Rev.) Mr. L. have the credulity to suppose, that the burning of the first number of the *Bee*, would keep the people from thinking, and talking about the impropriety of his and Mr. C's late religious impositions, called Bees? No! Whatever may be their opinions on the subject, I am confident that it will have a far different effect, and cause the former to be sought after and read with avidity, and the animadversions contained in the latter, will ultimately put a stop to such wicked perversions of charity.

"It is a melancholy reflection, that men cannot live in amity with each other; but so it is, and so we must expect to see it, as long as religious intolerance can find its way into the pulpit, and there vent out its sectarian denunciations. Religion is a cement,

calculated to bind the human family together, in one bond of brotherly affection, if rightly understood and practised. It teaches us charity and good will to all mankind, and denounces hatred, malice and strife, as vices disgraceful to the Christian character ; yet how often do we see the latter verified in men, *who call themselves* ministers of the gospel, who are in the habit of denouncing, in the vilest language, the doctrines of their fellow-labourers in the divine vineyard ! When the pulpit teems with rancour and virulence, how can we expect to see brotherly affection exist in society ? It is impossible—religious rancour is a deadly foe to human happiness.”

[We shall here endeavour to convey, what we suppose to be the writer’s meaning, with some difference of expression, and insert the words we use, in Italick characters.]

“ *The Deity in his bounteous dispensations of mercy, does not require it as a condition of our salvation, to believe in this man’s creed, or that man’s ; but without respect of persons freely accepts all, ‘in every nation’ who ‘fear God and work righteousness.’* This being the character of our Heavenly Father, how unbecoming it became one of his creatures, in this village, to get up in the pulpit, and consign to everlasting torments,\* men who only differed from him on abstract metaphysical questions ! If such a man could wield the thunderbolt of the mighty Jove, he would crush to atoms, nineteen parts out of twenty of the human family, and afterwards consign their souls, to languish through eternity, amid the sulphureous smoke of the bottomless pit ! If this be Christian charity, and calculated to harmonize neighbour with neighbour, it had been better had the Christian name never been known.

“ Who could have believed that the nineteenth century, in the enlightened States of America, would have produced men filled with such fanatical zeal, as to wish to replunge us into Gothic darkness, and to rekindle the flame of religious bigotry and persecution ! But such in reality, appears to be the case, from the denunciations which are frequently uttered from some of our pulpits. No stranger can come to preach in our village, who differs in sentiment with some of our metaphysical empirics, but their tenets are condemned in a most wanton and illiberal manner, without conceiving that they may be injuring the feelings of others, who have an equal right to a full enjoyment of their re-

“ \* Servetus, Bolingbroke and others. These were the words verbatim : “ my dear hearers, I hope that you will not think it presumptuous in me in saying, that these men are at this moment, expiating in Hell fire, for their damnable heresies.”

We would here state, as a note to the preceding, that *Servetus* was a professor of religion ; but differing from Calvin in sentiment respecting some things, his displeasure was excited against him, and at his instigation *Servetus* was burned at Geneva, the place of Calvin’s residence.—*Editors of The Reformer.*



ligious opinions. The constitution of our land guarantees it to all; therefore it is indecent and unbecoming any men professing themselves to be the followers of Christ, to abuse and denounce them for exercising that privilege. But as long as religion is a trade, and men have large salaries and sumptuous establishments, for expounding its mysteries, such contracted principles will exist among them; each wishing to promote his own interest, will undervalue the articles which his brother tradesman vends, and extol his own, as the only true and genuine commodity.

"N. B. The next number of the *Bee* will contain a Schedule of the amount of property contributed at the two late religious Bees, in this village, with a description of the articles, as near as can be ascertained; with a few comments on the appropriation.

A BEREAN."

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[We now present to the candid reader, "The Vindicator," as a specimen of the spirit and principles which have too generally emanated from such *Vindicators*; and shall add remarks, in the way of notes, without appending to the notes *Editors of The Reformer*.]

"In consequence of the appearance of a recent work entitled 'THE BEE,' I have been induced to usher, though rather hastily, this vindication of our Clergymen, from the foul and unmerited aspersions inflicted upon them, through the medium of that paper; which task I shall perform with a mind uncontaminated by sectarian bigotry, and unawed by malignant rancour.

"The Bee, above referred to, is not an emblem of the industrious insect that yields a sweetness for the present, and makes provision for a future period; but one, that armed with an envious sting, regards not the respect due to our Divines. This *BEE*—though now '*a mote in the sun beam*,' would, if caressed by the smiles of approbation, become a monster whose venom would embitter the cup of our happiness with distrust. It teems with a licentiousness that would destroy the sanctity of our temples,\* and shake to its base, the foundation of our religious liberties. Thus it earnestly behoves those who have a regard for their present sacred enjoyments, as christians, to repel with contempt this late effort to diminish the confidence which we repose in our Divines.

"The Bee" is a very small work, containing but little more than we have inserted; and we have selected, what this writer, no doubt, considers the worst part, which will enable the public to judge respecting its tendency.

"To repel with *contempt*," seems a new way of proceeding for christians, not before come under our notice. To repel by *argument* or *scripture testimony* we conceive would be a method more suitable. Unhappily for the cause "Vindicator" espouses, very little of this can be seen in the whole of his vindication.

"Even the flow of language with which the Bee is executed, cannot, for a moment, obscure the malignity of its intentions.

"Although it bears an individual signature, yet the Bee is the production of many persons, to whom, were the public acquainted with them, no credit would be attributed.—They are men, who regard not the Sabbath nor reverence its holy intent. Instead of devoting that sacred day in serving that GOD whom they profess with zealous hearts to worship, some of them seek the haunts of dissipation; and while revelling under the unhallowed roofs of human depravity, issue vilifying assertions against our ecclesiastics, in language and epithets most applicable to themselves.\* It is the opinion of one of the most prominent of these men, that *savages* are more *civilized* than *christians*;—was *he* a criterion of christianity, I must confess, his opinion would hold good; for no man possessing common civility, could have the presumption to use such indecorous and undeserving assertions against the Reverend Messrs. Cuyler and Leonard, as he has.—Assertions that convey an insult to every individual attached to the congregations of these gentlemen. What! is there none of that vast number who can discover the errors complained of in the Bee? Are they idiots? or are they so completely blinded with infatuation, as not to discern the hypocrisy which the Bee mentions with such unblushing confidence? But that confidence is inconsiderate impudence; and its possessors will learn, that their calumny, instead of being encouraged, will be degraded and spurned with that contempt which malignant envy ever merits.

"Mr. Cuyler appears to have incurred a considerable portion of the Bee-hive censure for cautioning his hearers against a new paper called *The Reformer*, and which his assailants term, "a useful little work." But he, doubting its utility, requested his congregation to discountenance it. Calling *The Reformer* 'a useful work,' is one of the many incorrect assertions which

\* What is here stated, we consider unbecoming the cause the writer would be thought to espouse; but is perfectly accordant with the manner of those, who in all ages, have been engaged in the cause he really is espousing. That there may be those, who see through the superficial covering of false ministers, and represent them, perhaps, as they truly are, that do not live according to the true spirit of the gospel, we shall not dispute: but that the "*many persons*," said to produce the publication here attacked, are persons, "to whom, were the public acquainted with them, no credit would be attributed," cannot be believed upon the bare assertion of this "*Vindicator*;" especially, when it is so clearly to be seen, that he is on the same side of the question, and has too much of the same spirit, with those, who said of our Lord himself, that he regarded not the Sabbath, was *a wine bibber*, and *a friend* (meaning, perhaps, an associate) of *publicans and sinners*. "*Vindicator*," therefore, would have saved his credit, and those of his party, more than he can possibly have injured those whom he opposes, by withholding such wholesale and envenomed abuses. The old Pharisee is seen too clearly in these aspersions to answer the purpose intended.



the authors of the Bee have set forth. Its name sufficiently indicates its purport; it wishes a reformation, even if erected upon the ruins of our present religious liberties;\* and its patrons in this village, annoyed at the interference of Mr. Cuyler, dispute the privilege he has taken, in publicly expressing his disapprobation of it.—They declaim, that his remarks upon the work, were an usurpation of religious principles, prompted only by sectarian jealousy.

“With equal propriety, it may be asked, what right has this or any other government to prohibit the publication of Paine’s *Age of Reason*?† Because they conceive his REASON to be MADNESS—mere sophistical ideas, which cannot be supported by the dictates of sense; ideas established only, upon arguments which in themselves are contradictory.

“Acting under these impressions, governments expel the licentious writings of that author, and in so doing, they acquit their obligations to their God and their country. And if any would-be Reformer, attempts to infringe upon our religious opinions, with illiberal intentions, or even suspected designs of evil, it is our ministers’ [duty,] as the sentinels of our religion to warn us of the impending evil.

“The good shepherd is ever on the alert, tenacious of the welfare of the flock committed to his trust; and should a wolf intrude, disguised as a lamb, it is his duty to give the alarm.

“Mr. Cuyler’s situation is a similar one; and by warning the members of his congregation to beware of every effort made to traduce the principles they have imbibed, he will secure a con-

\* What the writer here means, by *religious liberties*, seems a little difficult to comprehend—unless it be liberty to be let alone, in the practice of things, which, being contrary to true christianity, ought to be rebuked and testified against. Liberty to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, and to point out evils, in order for their amendment, when it is believed to be a duty, we esteem a great privilege, and we would be the last to sanction the taking of it away from any person, by any human laws or penalties. Were it not for this religious liberty in this land, there would be no safety, even for life itself, in pointing out the evils we have done; and we must confess, we would not like to have *our present religious liberties* entrusted solely to this “Vindicator,” lest he should make use of something different from pen, ink and paper, to vindicate his cause, and his “Divines,” so called.

† We are not of sufficient discernment to discover any great similarity between Paine’s *Age of Reason*, and the principles held forth in *The Reformer*; and are willing to submit the consideration of this case to our readers. We are not unacquainted with the nature of bigotted intolerance, and what has resulted from it to pious and sincere persons formerly, even in this country. It once subjected people in New England to a heavy fine, whipping, or imprisonment, to have a book, or any writings of the Society of Friends in their houses; (the great crime seemed to be, they contained a testimony against hireling ministers,) and four persons of this religious persuasion were hung in those parts for the discharge of what they believed to be their duty. This writer, had he lived at that day, might perhaps have taken an active part in these persecutions, in vindication of the Priesthood. The sentiments held forth, and the spirit evinced in this publication, seem to warrant such a supposition.

tinuance of that confidence and esteem they have heretofore conferred upon him.

"In as hasty a manner as I appeared before them, I now take leave of the public, trusting, that they will be as ready as myself, to discourage the efforts of those who have, by attacking, endeavoured to diminish the reverence and respect due to our Divines. Once sacrifice that reverence to the will of envy, and our religious and national liberties would be usurped by a system of persecution, worse, if possible, than that inflicted by the inquisition of Spain."

"ONE OF MANY."

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We have now given the publication, entitled "The Vindicator," entire; and though it is not large, we should suppose he might have dispensed with such a portion of its abuse and invective, as to point out, in some part of it, what principles or sentiments are wrong and contrary to true christianity, that have been advanced in the publications he has attacked—and bring forward *scripture testimony, reason or argument in proof* of it. If he had done this, there would have been ground for a belief that he was actuated by a principle of integrity, and wished only to see the cause of truth supported; and, however pointed his replies might be to us, we should have considered him as a true christian, and a lover of righteousness. But he appears to have undertaken an entire new way of defending his cause, quite inadmissible for any one who would wish to be thought of a christian spirit; for laying aside argument, reason and scripture testimony, he has used in the place of them, abuses; and, what we fear, is undeserved calumny. What has been reprov'd and discountenanced in both the publications which have so much offended him, were real evils, contrary to christianity, and injurious to the happiness of mankind; and for our part, as Editors of the Reformer, we can assure "Vindicator," we pointed them out in order for their amendment—believing it to be a duty; and we have, as much as possible, avoided any thing like asperity of language. But, as *Evangelist* has stated in this number, there is nothing whereof it may be said—this is new? *it hath been already of old time*. Christ himself, and the ancient prophets, pointed out and rebuked evils with great plainness, according to the will of God, and with a *good intention*; but those whose evils they rebuked, were filled with enmity, and became persecutors. And it is a true observation that whenever the Lord has no longer any pleasure in a people, he gives them up to persecute those who deliver a faithful testimony as the most effectual way to bring their own cause to ruin.

We might here add more, if the time to issue this number and our pages would admit of it, though more appears unnecessary. We would willingly have inserted the whole of Vindicator's piece, in The Reformer, without making remarks on it, in regard to any injury that could arise from it, to us or our publication; for his own cause, more than any other, must suffer by the vindication he has attempted: but some observations seemed due to the public. We have nothing to fear from any spiritual weapons, so long as we have the shield of truth to defend us; but we have reason to believe, from this very piece, did the laws of our country admit of it, that something different from words and sentences, would be made use of against us.—We shall conclude with an extract of a letter from a respectable citizen of Poughkeepsie, received with the second number of *The Bee*, and *Vindicator*, which came to hand just in time for the present number.

"As *The Reformer* is opposed to the hirelings, they have denounced it, and would, I suppose, if it were in their power, suppress the circulation of it entirely; but, as yet, we have the privilege of reading it; subject, however, to the *anathemas* of the above characters."

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Printed for the editors by G. L. Austin, back of 39, Cherry street, agent for The Reformer—to whom those wishing to become subscribers, can signify it either by mail or private conveyance.

Price of *The Reformer* one dollar a year, half payable in advance, the remainder at the end of six months. Subscribers can be supplied with numbers from the beginning of the year.